



Department of the Capital Territory

# Canberra Nature Park

## Ainslie - Majura TRAIL GUIDE



A.C.T. CONSERVATION SERVICE

The twin peaks of Mount Ainslie and Mount Majura are two of a number of hills, associated bushland areas and open space known collectively as the Canberra Nature Park. The ACT Conservation Service, Department of the Capital Territory manages the Canberra Nature Park as part of a system of nature reserves in the ACT and Jervis Bay Territory. The Canberra Nature Park provides a range of recreational opportunities for Canberra residents and visitors and has significant value for conservation, educational, scientific and aesthetic purposes.

Fire trails and specially constructed walking trails provide easy access across steep terrain and through dense vegetation. Two walking trails lead to the summits of Mount Ainslie and Mount Majura which provide expansive views of urban Canberra and surrounding rural land.

Walkers are not restricted to the trails described in this pamphlet. Shorter or longer walks can be planned by using any of the tracks marked on the accompanying map. However, please keep to existing tracks to avoid unnecessary trampling of soil and small plants. The time given for completion of each trail refers to a moderate walking pace. Allow extra time for rests taken.

Horse riding is permitted only on trails signposted for this purpose.

## HORSE TRAILS

Horse trails have been established on Ainslie-Majura. One trail follows a route around Mount Majura while the other, on the lower, western slopes of Mount Ainslie, connects the horse paddocks at Hackett with those at Duntroon. The step-over log gates (cavalettis) allow access by horses and pedestrians but prevent entry by trail bikes. Two dams on the Mount Majura horse trail provide the only watering points on Ainslie-Majura.

The routes of the horse trails are marked with special posts and horse riders are asked to keep to the designated horse trails to avoid damaging vegetation and soil elsewhere on Ainslie-Majura.



Kurrajongs (*Brachychiton populneum*) were planted in 1915 as part of a revegetation program on Mount Majura

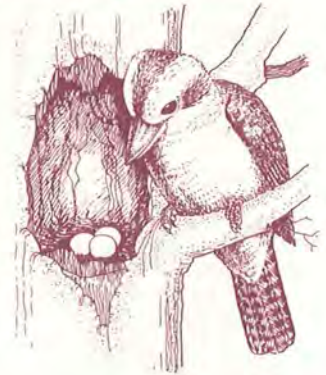
The bluebell (*Wahlenbergia* spp) is a common plant of more open areas of Ainslie-Majura



## MOUNT AINSLIE SUMMIT WALKING TRAIL

Length: 1.7 km; (3.0 km via alternative route to quarry)  
Time: 1-1½ hours down; 2 hours up  
Category: Easy walking down; moderate walking up

This trail links the picnic area behind the Australian War Memorial and the lookout on the summit of Mount Ainslie. It is possible to start at either end of the trail. These notes describe the walk when commencing at the picnic area.



Kookaburra

Within 300 m of the picnic area, the trail crosses two fire trails. An alternative route via a former quarry may be taken here by taking the second fire trail to the right and following this to the quarry. Rock from the quarry was used for road construction during the early development of Canberra. A walking trail leaves the quarry and rejoins the main walking trail further up Mount Ainslie. Allow approximately thirty minutes to visit the quarry.

The walking trail continues towards the summit and passes many old gnarled scribbly gum (*Eucalyptus rossii*) and red spotted gum (*E. mannifera* subsp. *maculosa*). Some trees have hollow limbs and trunks which provide shelter for mammals such as possums, sugar gliders and bats and nesting sites for many birds including rosellas, kookaburras and treecreepers. The twining plant, false sarsaparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) is common in this area.

False sarsaparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) has vivid purple flowers in spring



The walking trail ascends a series of rock steps as it approaches the summit. To the left of these steps are large areas of volcanic rock covered in parts by mosses and lichens. These small plants contribute to the process of rock weathering to form soil.

Return to the Australian War Memorial via the same route.

# WOODLAND TRAIL

Length: 10 km  
 Time: 4-5 hours  
 Category: Moderate to difficult; steep in parts

The route of the woodland trail is not completely signposted although significant intersections are marked with red arrows.

Park your vehicle near the reservoir located on the eastern side of Mt Ainslie Drive, 1.0 km from the intersection with Fairbairn Avenue. Follow the fire trail that passes through a gate at the south-east corner of the reservoir and heads in an easterly direction. About 500 m from the gate the fire trail intersects a powerline running in a north-south direction. Turn left and follow the fire trail under the powerlines until a gate is reached 50 m from a T-intersection with the saddle road (about 40 minutes walking). Pass through the gate and turn left onto the Saddle road. Approximately 50 m from the T-intersection take the narrow uphill trail which leads to the right towards the Majura pine plantation.



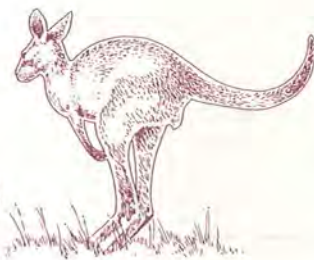
Hickory wattle (*Acacia implexa*), a small tree with dense clusters of twisted seed pods.

As the pine plantation is approached, a reservoir will be seen to the left of the trail. Turn left at the reservoir and follow the grey gravel road that leads down to Mackenzie Street, Hackett. Approximately 500 m from the reservoir a large powerline crosses this road. Turn left and follow the powerline easement until it rejoins the Saddle road. Join the Mount Ainslie horse trail and return to Mt Ainslie Drive via the western slopes of Mount Ainslie.



Everlasting daisy (*Helichrysum* spp)

The eastern grey kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*) is often seen in mobs of 5-10 on the eastern side of Mount Ainslie



# CASUARINA WALKING TRAIL

Length: 4.5 km (6.0 km via alternative route)  
 Time: 2-2½ hours  
 Category: Moderate

The Casuarina walking trail starts and finishes at the car park near the reservoir behind Rivett St, Hackett. These notes describe the trail when walked in a clockwise direction.

Initially the trail passes through the Hackett horse paddocks which enclose woodland remnants where the understorey of shrubs and grasses is depleted due to grazing by domestic animals.

The remaining trees are apple box (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*), scribbly gum (*E. rossii*) and red spotted gum (*E. mannifera* subsp. *maculosa*) and many have mistletoe (*Amyema pendulum*), a parasitic plant, hanging from them.

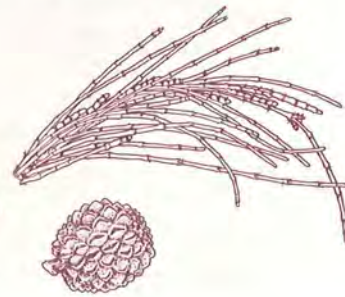


The mistletoe bird feeds on the fruit of the mistletoe. The seed, which has a sticky coat, is discarded onto a branch where it may germinate and so establish a new mistletoe plant.

Approximately 0.5 km from the carpark, just after the trail crosses a stile, the start of an alternative route across the western slopes of Mount Majura is reached. Both routes traverse similar vegetation where the understorey has not been subjected to grazing although the alternative route ascends by a more gentle gradient and rejoins the Casuarina trail 450 m further up Mount Majura.

The Casuarina trail then continues across the slopes of Mount Majura and passes over a small bridge which spans a gully. The drooping she-oak (*Casuarina stricta*) is the most common tree in the vicinity of the bridge and gives the trail its name. This native tree should not be confused with the exotic pine tree which superficially has similar needle-like leaves.

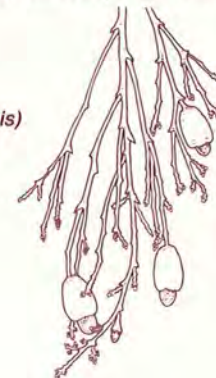
Drooping she-oak (*Casuarina stricta*) Male and female flowers are borne on separate trees



Approximately 400 m from the bridge, the Casuarina trail joins a fire trail which leads to the summit of Mount Majura. At this point it is possible to make a diversion and follow the fire trail to the summit. The fire trail is steep in parts but the panoramic views from the summit are well worth the effort. Allow about thirty minutes for this diversion (distance 1 km).

The Casuarina trail returns to the car-park through open woodland where yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) is the most common tree.

The small red berries of the cherry ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) are edible and were probably eaten by the aborigines.



# PLEASE REMEMBER

- To take your litter home and help the Department cut costs and reduce pollution.
- To leave all plants and animals undisturbed.
- To carry your own drinking water.
- Unauthorised vehicles and trail bikes are prohibited on Ainslie-Majura.
- Removal of rock, green or dead timber, leaf litter and soil is not permitted. Leave them for the next visitor to enjoy.
- Fires are permitted only in fireplaces constructed and maintained by the Department of the Capital Territory. If you see a bush fire please report its location as soon as possible to the ACT Bush Fire Council, phone 47 0470.
- Entry to the Radar Station (Department of Transport) on the summit of Mount Majura is prohibited.

For further information consult:  
*A Guide to Eucalypts in the ACT*, Department of the Capital Territory.

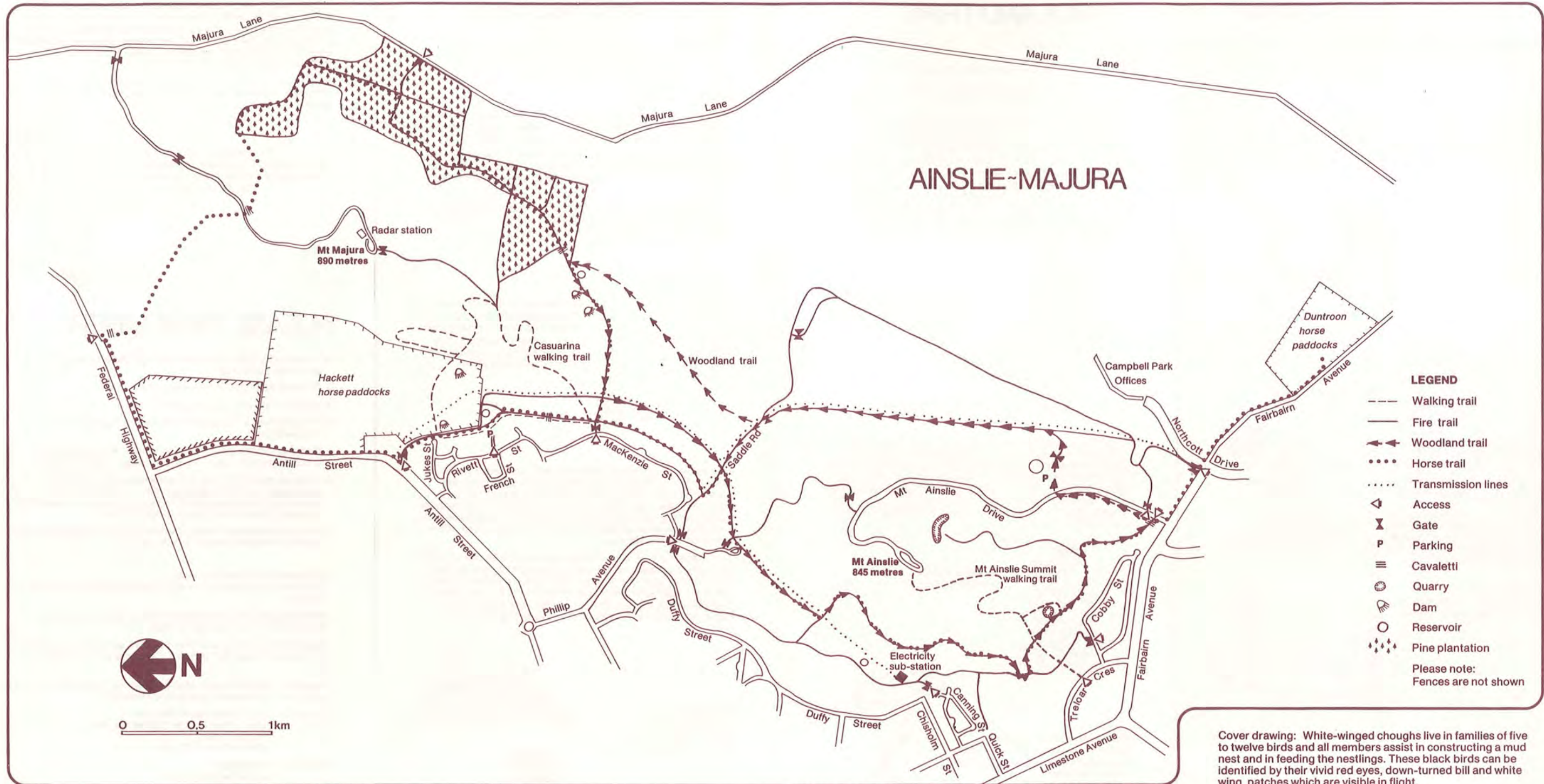
*Nature Guide, Black Mountain, Ainslie-Majura Reserves*, Department of the Capital Territory.

(Available from the Department of the Capital Territory, City Information Kiosk, Petrie Plaza, Canberra City, Phone 46 3027.)

*Vegetation of the Ainslie-Majura Reserve*, Ingwersen F. (1974) (out of print but available at public libraries).

or write to: ACT Conservation Service  
 Department of the Capital Territory  
 PO Box 158  
 CANBERRA CITY 2601

or phone: The Manager  
 Canberra Nature Park  
 46 2089



# AINSLIE-MAJURA

## LEGEND

- Walking trail
- Fire trail
- ← Woodland trail
- Horse trail
- ..... Transmission lines
- ◁ Access
- ⌘ Gate
- P Parking
- ≡ Cavaletti
- ⊙ Quarry
- ⦿ Dam
- Reservoir
- ◆ Pine plantation

Please note:  
Fences are not shown

Cover drawing: White-winged choughs live in families of five to twelve birds and all members assist in constructing a mud nest and in feeding the nestlings. These black birds can be identified by their vivid red eyes, down-turned bill and white wing patches which are visible in flight.